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**The situation in the Middle East**

**Question of Palestine**

**Security Council**
**Sixty-third year**

## Letter dated 31 January 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, I have the honour to enclose herewith a statement by the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip, adopted on Thursday, 31 January 2008 (see annex).

The recent failure of the Security Council to act to address the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, resulting from the illegal and deliberate policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population, constitute a clear example of the lack of capacity of this organ to effectively fulfil its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security conferred by Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations.

Furthermore, I kindly request that the above-mentioned document be circulated as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 17 and 18, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Rodrigo **Malmierca Díaz**
Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations
Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau
of the Non-Aligned Movement

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## Annex to the letter dated 31 January 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

## Statement by the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip

The Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) expresses its deep regret that, once again, the Security Council was unable to act to address the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, resulting from the illegal and deliberate policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power against the Palestinian civilian population.

This recent failure of the Security Council to deal with the situation in Gaza will not help to ameliorate the situation on the ground, will not help to advance the peace process and will not engender confidence in the credibility of the Security Council and its ability to effectively address those serious issues that come before it.

NAM expresses its appreciation to the members of the NAM Caucus in the Security Council and to other members of the Security Council, in fact the overwhelming majority of them, that exerted serious efforts and acted in good faith in an effort to have the Security Council uphold its responsibilities and respond in a timely and practical manner to the ongoing escalating tragedy in the Gaza Strip.

NAM reiterates its deep concern about the critical humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and the ongoing illegal Israeli practices throughout the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, and once again calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by its obligations under international law and to immediately cease its collective punishment of the Palestinian people and all other illegal actions in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. NAM calls upon Israel to open the Gaza Strip's border crossings to allow for the movement of persons and goods, including essential humanitarian supplies, such as food and medicine, and fuel supplies in order to alleviate the humanitarian suffering of the Palestinian civilian population. In this regard NAM welcomes the Palestinian Authority proposal to assume responsibility for the Palestinian side of the Gaza Strip's border crossings.

NAM reaffirms its commitment to continuing its efforts to alleviating the hardship of the Palestinian people during this difficult time and to promoting the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, with the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

New York, 31 January 2008

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## Identical letters dated 4 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to inform you of a devastating terrorist attack that took place today in Israel.

Early this morning, two Palestinian terrorists carried out a suicide attack against Israeli civilians at a shopping mall in the southern town of Dimona. One Israeli civilian was killed and 11 others were wounded, among them one critically and two moderately. The two terrorists were killed during the course of the attack; the first terrorist detonated and killed himself, causing the initial explosion, and the second terrorist was killed by an alert police officer, who thwarted that terrorist from detonating a second bomb as rescuers arrived at the scene to assist the wounded.

This alarming and fatal act of Palestinian terrorism demonstrates very clearly what the terrorist organizations stand for and what they are trying to accomplish. Like the daily Qassam rocket attacks, this terrorist attack was deliberately targeted at civilians, with the express purpose of maiming and murdering them. Moreover, the second terrorist waited specifically until rescue workers arrived to attempt to detonate his bomb. If not for the heroism of the police officer, the terrorists would have succeeded in killing countless others.

My delegation has previously written about the urgent need for an end to all Palestinian violence and terrorism against Israel. As this terrorist attack shows yet again, Palestinian terrorism remains the greatest obstacle to peace and security in the region. The Palestinian leadership must stop the violence, dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, end the cycle of impunity and bring the terrorists to justice. Furthermore, Israel urges all States to adhere to their international obligations, in particular, Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), which calls on all States to "prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups" and to refrain from supporting them.

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Israel will continue to defend itself and its citizens, as any other sovereign nation would, as is its right under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 17 and 18, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dan **Gillerman**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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## Identical letters dated 4 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write in connection to the letter from the Permanent Representative of Cuba, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, addressed to the President of the Security Council, dated 31 January 2008 (S/2008/62), and circulated thereafter to the United Nations membership.

As in previous letters to the Security Council, my delegation has repeatedly warned about the escalation of Palestinian terrorist activity from the Gaza Strip and frequency of attacks against Israel. The facts on the ground clearly show that Hamas bears sole responsibility for the deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip. It is Hamas' pursuit of terrorism and indiscriminate rocket fire that make security measures taken in self-defence to protect civilians, as is Israel's right under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, a necessity. Moreover, Hamas has chosen to divert fuel and resources in the Gaza Strip from civilians in order to manufacture more rockets. Similarly, Hamas fires on the crossing points into Gaza and abuses humanitarian convoys to smuggle weapons. In doing so, Hamas clearly — and cynically — has created a situation for the very people it purports to care for. Yet the statement circulated by the Non-Aligned Movement Chairman levelled all criticism against Israel and expressed no concern for Israel's civilians.

Excellency, I assure you that my delegation has no interest in ridiculing or distorting the positions of any Member State, either adopted independently or as a group, as the aforementioned letter alleges. Indeed, in our letter to you (A/62/667-S/2008/55) dated 28 January, we made clear that Israel believes that responsible members of the international community can play a constructive role by supporting the bilateral process between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. But that support means that Member States should take a balanced approach to the conflict. Embracing one-sided narratives as the statement circulated by the Non-Aligned

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Movement Chairman does, particularly when Israeli security concerns are wholly ignored and even trivialized, will not advance the prospects for peace.

Moreover, numerous members of the Council affiliated with the Non-Aligned Movement in their national statements, as well as other Non-Aligned Movement members in bilateral meetings with our Mission, have recognized the legitimacy of the Israeli position regarding terrorist attacks and condemned — in no uncertain terms — the indiscriminate rocket fire by Palestinian terrorists. These Non-Aligned Movement members have expressed their understanding that Hamas is liable for its actions and Israel has an inherent right to defend itself from these attacks. In the light of this, my delegation felt it necessary to point out the potentially deleterious effects of the statement circulated by the Non-Aligned Movement Chairman, and underscore how it failed to reflect the reality on the ground.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 17 and 18, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dan **Gillerman**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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## Identical letters dated 4 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to inform you that, on 3 February 2008 at 1930 hours, Israeli enemy forces opened fire towards the outskirts of the town of al-Wazzani from their positions in the occupied part of the village of al-Ghajar, which led to the killing of a Lebanese citizen, 'Abdullah al-Muhammad, and the wounding of another citizen, Salim al-Qubaysi. This attack was accompanied by the firing of flare shells in Lebanese airspace. These events have been confirmed by the joint committee formed by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the Lebanese Army in order to consider this aggression.

My Government considers this act to be a flagrant attack on the sovereignty of my country and a serious breach of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). It should be condemned in the strongest possible terms on the basis of the principles and provisions of international law and customs.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 17, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nawaf **Salam**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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